

Tom Horne  
Superintendent

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## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### **ARIZONA SCHOOLS CHIEF TOM HORNE AND UNDERSECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE ERIC BOST ANNOUNCE PROGRAM TO PROMOTE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION IN EIGHT ARIZONA SCHOOLS**

PHOENIX (Tuesday, September 28, 2004) – Tom Horne, State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Eric Bost, Undersecretary of USDA's Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Division today announced eight Arizona schools within the Gila River and Tohono O'dham communities that have been selected by the USDA to participate in a Fruit and Vegetable Program. The purpose of this program is to surround students with fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the day. Produce may be offered before, during and after school.

"I have been an advocate of healthier food products since taking this office," Horne stated. "Nothing can be more important to us than the health of our children and this fruit and vegetable program is a very important step in the right direction."

Growing concern over the increased prevalence of childhood obesity and growing interest in the association between fruit and vegetable consumption and potential health benefits has prompted Federal and State agencies to take action. This innovative new program is designed to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables among children.

The program will be available to children in 8 elementary and secondary schools from member tribes of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona currently participating in the National School Lunch Program.

The eight Arizona schools selected include three in the Gila River Community, Akimel O'Otham Pee Posh, Casa Blanca Elementary School and Gila Crossing Community School. And five in the Tohono O'dham community, San Simon School, San Xavier Mission School, Santa Rosa Boarding School, Santa Rosa Ranch School and Tohono O'dham High School.

The Arizona Department of Education in partnership with Arizona Nutrition Network and USDA will work closely with participating schools providing technical assistance to ensure a smooth transition into the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program for the 2004-2005 school year.

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The Arizona Department of Education will collect pre and post data from the participating schools in order to evaluate the nutritional impact of the Fruit and Vegetable program.

Arizona is one of eight states participating in the National Fruit and Vegetable program. The funding, yet to be determined, will be available October 1, 2004, and each October thereafter through 2008. In addition, USDA and the National 5-A-Day Partnership will provide educational materials to participating schools.

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